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RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY 8211
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SUBJECT: DAS SWAN,S MEETING WITH CAR PRESIDENT BOZIZE

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Highlighting the progress made during recent peace talks in Libreville, CAR President Bozize informed AF DAS Swan that a revised and more expansive amnesty bill was with the national assembly, and the CARG hoped to establish a tentative date for the national dialogue. Bozize also reiterated his support for MINURCAT,s presence in the CAR, as well as peacekeeping efforts in northwest CAR. The CAR President expressed concern over the slow implementation of foreign assistance programs in the CAR, and appealed for USG support in facilitating positive relations between the CARG and IFIs. END SUMMARY.

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CAR MOVING FORWARD ON NATIONAL DIALOGUE
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¶2. (SBU) During a September 25 meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) Swan at the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, President Bozize noted that the Government of the Central African Republic (CARG) remained committed to peace talks with the armed opposition and national dialogue. He indicated that the Government had agreed to support an expanded amnesty bill that included acts that would potentially implicate APRD President Jean Jacques Demafouth and former CAR president Ang-Felix Patasse. The CARG, according to Bozize, understood the importance of ensuring the amnesty bill be as expansive as possible to appeal to all groups involved in the peace process.

¶3. (SBU) Bozize added that the CARG now hoped for the national assembly to approve the amnesty bill and draft budget for the national dialogue, after which the Government would work with the appropriate parties to determine a date for the national dialogue to commence. (NOTE: During a meeting later that day with DAS Swan, Gabonese FM Laurie Gondjout said that the GOG went to great measures to bring the parties to reconcile their differences and reach an agreement on the expanded amnesty bill. Gabonese authorities criticized Demafouth for pulling out of the talks without notifying the other parties and going directly to the press. At the same time, they highlighted to Bozize the importance of preparing an amnesty bill that was acceptable to the armed opposition. In spite of the progress made, Gondjout pointed out that as opposition to expanded amnesty existed in both the ranks of the armed opposition and the National Assembly, there was still more work to be done to move the draft legislation forward. She also asserted that the budgetary proposal from the CARG established a price-tag of three million US for the National Dialogue, for which donor support is needed. END NOTE)

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SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

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13. (SBU) The CAR president noted his continued support for the United Nations Mission in the CAR and Chad (MINURCAT), citing the need to overcome objections by Security Council members (including the British). He contended that a failure to continue MINURCAT's presence in northeast CAR would provide a security vacuum that would allow a number of armed groups, including CAR rebels potentially supported in the past by Sudanese authorities and members of the Chadian armed opposition, to operate in and destabilize the region. DAS Swan highlighted the USG position of support the continued deployment of MINURCAT in northeast CAR.

14. (SBU) Bozize added that the CARG continued to welcome the presence and activities of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC) peacekeeping operation in the northwestern part of CAR (MICOPAX-1). However, continued insecurity around the country, particularly in the form of banditry in lawless areas in the country, continued to hinder development of the CAR. Lord's Resistance Army attacks in Obo in southeast CAR (which could potentially recommence once the rainy season ends) added to the concerns for the security of the civilian population.

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FOREIGN AID CONCERNS

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15. (SBU) Finally, Bozize stated that development and reform activities were continuing in several areas, particularly Security Sector Reform (SSR), as the CARG was working closely with the European Union to implement a comprehensive SSR national plan. Nevertheless, greater efforts needed to be taken to reduce poverty, improve economic conditions, and reduce insecurity. Bozize admitted that the CARG would need to demonstrate greater commitments, but also required greater support from the international financial institutions (IFIs).

According to him, while the Government lacks the political capacity to reduce corruption and improve transparency, it is prepared to tackle these issues. However, donors needed to expedite the disbursement of funds to support development efforts in the country. The President cited specific delays in the disbursement of EU assistance, which postponed the implementation of road construction projects. Bozize asked for USG support in urging the International Monetary Fund and other donors to more promptly disburse resources for government initiatives. DAS Swan noted that the Department was finalizing the spending plan for two million dollars in foreign assistance for the CAR; Bozize expressed his appreciation for the USG initiatives, and indicated an interest in learning more about the assistance programs from Ambassador Cook.

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